

REMARKS and ARGUMENTS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action dated May 28, 2003 and the references cited therein. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application.

The Examiner has objected to the claims for various minor informalities in claims 6, 14 and 23. In response, Applicants have amended these claims as suggested by the Examiner and in a manner to overcome such objections. These amendments have not been made to distinguish over any reference of record and no narrowing of any corresponding equivalents to which the amended limitation(s) or claim(s) is/are entitled is intended by these amendments.

Claim 3 has been amended now recites "wherein the housing defines *a plurality of cavities* that accommodate multiple pin connectors attached to the circuit board" (claim three, lines 1-30). Such amendment is believed to address the Examiner's rejection.

Claims 4-6, 9-10, 12, 14-17 and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by United States Patent 6,050,839, Seminara et al., hereafter Seminara. In addition, claims 2, 7-8, 11, 13, 18-20 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seminara. Prior to addressing the Examiner's rejections, Applicants request that the Examiner consider the following information.

The present invention discloses an apparatus for protecting and mechanically isolating the multiplicity of electrically conductive pins within a pin connector. The present invention does not disclose or claim an electrical connector used to establish an electrical connection through contact with the electrically conductive pins of the pin connector. Indeed, some of the objects of the invention are prevent contamination of and damage to the electrically conductive pins within pin connector(s).

Seminara discloses a two-part, flexible electrical connector used to join electrical harnesses in a car door assembly to the body of the vehicle. An important feature of the apparatus disclosed in Seminara is that the covering, which the Examiner is analogizing to the housing of the claimed apparatus, be made of a flexible material, such as rubber, so that the covering can expand and retract as the vehicle door is

opened and closed. (Seminara col. 2, line 63 through col. 3, line 2). Conversely, the apparatus of the present invention comprises an at least semi-rigid housing in order to protect and prevent damage to any pin connectors disposed therein.

In addition, the apparatus disclosed in Seminara is intended to establish an electrical connection, i.e. make surface contact, with the electrically conductive pins that are part of the vehicle's electrical circuitry. In contrast, the pin connector apparatus of the present invention is intended to surround and protect, but not to make contact with, any of the plurality of electrically conductive pins comprising a pin connector. In this manner, by maintaining space between the protective housing and the electrically conductive surfaces of the pins, damage and/or contamination of the pins is prevented, as set forth in the subject specification (serial no. 09/920,508, paragraphs 2-5 and 25).

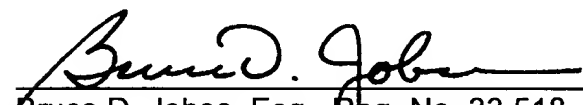
Claims 12, 14, 18 and 23 have been amended to highlight these aspects of the subject invention. Specifically, the preamble of claim 12 now recites an apparatus for protecting one or more electrical pin connectors "*each having a plurality of electrically conductive pins*" on a circuit board. In addition, claim 12 has been amended to recite an "*at least semi-rigid housing*" and "*a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector without contacting any of the electrically conductive pins*" (claim 12, lines 2-6). The Examiner has not shown where Seminara discloses, teaches or suggests an apparatus for protecting one or more pin connectors including *an at least semi-rigid housing* and *a mechanism for removably securing the housing over the pin connector without contacting any of the conductive pins*, as now recited. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that claim 12 is patentable over Seminara whether considered singularly or in combination with any other reference of record, for the reasons stated above. Claims 2-11 include all the limitations of claim 12 and are likewise believed allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 12, as well as for the merits of their own respective limitations.

Claims 14, 18 and 23 have been amended to recite similar limitations (claim 14, lines 2-6; claim 23, lines 2-6; claim 18, lines 5-10). Applicants respectfully assert that claims 14, 18 and 23, as well as their respective dependent claims, are also patentable over Seminara for at least the same reasons as claim 12, as well as for the merits of their own respective limitations.

Applicant respectfully reasserts all of the remarks and traversals set forth in prior response(s) to the extent still relevant to the outstanding rejections.

Applicants believe the claims are in allowable condition. A notice of allowance for this application is solicited earnestly. If the Examiner has any further questions regarding this amendment, he/she is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the number listed below. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any balances under 37 CFR §1.17, and 1.16 to Deposit Account No. 02-3038.

Respectfully submitted,



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